

(3) anchor elements configured to attach said prosthesis valve to said flexible sewing cuff after said flexible sewing cuff has been attached to a patient;

B) a fastener configured to attach said sewing cuff to the patient from one side of said sewing cuff, said fastener having an elastic limit and an initial shape; and

C) a tool operative to force said fastener through said sewing cuff thereby attach said sewing cuff to the patient without exceeding the elastic limit of said fastener and while retaining the initial shape of said fastener.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 14, 15 and 20 have been amended in formalistic respects to ensure consistency in the claim terminology. Claims 21-27 have been added and contain subject matter of claims 1, 3 and 16-20. the major difference between the original claims and these new claims is that the means-plus-function language has been eliminated.

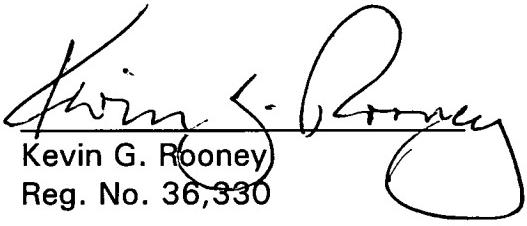
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment.

If there is any additional matter that may be resolved by telephone or fax, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to expedite issuance of this application.

Applicants do not believe that any fees are due in connection with this response. However, if such petition is due or any fees are necessary, the Commissioner may consider this to be a request for such and charge any necessary fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend claims 1, 3, 14, 15 and 20 as follows:

1. (Amended) In combination:

A) a multipart prosthesis which includes

(1) a flexible sewing cuff,

(2) a prosthesis valve separate and spaceable from said

flexible sewing cuff, and

(3) means for securely attaching said prosthesis [body] valve

to said flexible sewing cuff after said flexible sewing cuff has been attached to a

patient; and

B) a tool for attaching said flexible sewing cuff to the patient in a

minimally invasive manner and which includes

(1) a housing,

(2) an operating handle mounted on one end of said housing,

(3) at least one fastener stored in said housing, said fastener

having an elastic limit,

(4) means for releasably mounting said flexible sewing cuff to

said tool, and

(5) a fastener handling means on said housing and

operationally connected to said operating handle to be controlled by said operating

handle for storing said fastener and securing said fastener through said flexible

sewing cuff and into the patient's tissue from one side of said sewing cuff and the

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tissue to attach said flexible sewing cuff to the patient without deforming said fastener beyond its elastic limit.

3. (Twice Amended) In combination:

A) a multipart prosthesis which includes

- (1) a flexible sewing cuff,
- (2) a prosthesis valve separate from said flexible sewing cuff,

and

(3) means for attaching said prosthesis [body] valve to said flexible sewing cuff after said flexible sewing cuff has been placed in a patient; and

B) a tool for placing said flexible sewing cuff in the patient in a minimally invasive manner and which includes

- (1) a housing,
- (2) an operating handle mounted on said housing,
- (3) at least one fastener stored in said housing, said fastener

having an elastic limit,

(4) means for releasably mounting said flexible sewing cuff to said tool, and

(5) a fastener handling means on said housing and operationally connected to said operating handle to be controlled by said operating handle for storing said fastener and securing said fastener through said flexible sewing cuff and into the patient's tissue from one side of said sewing cuff and the

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tissue to attach said flexible sewing cuff to the patient without deforming said fastener beyond its elastic limit.

14. (Amended) In combination:

A) a heart valve prosthesis which includes

- (1) a flexible sewing cuff,
- (2) a prosthesis valve separate from said flexible sewing cuff,

and

(3) means for securely attaching said valve [body] to said flexible sewing cuff after said flexible swing cuff has been placed in a patient; and

B) a tool for placing said flexible sewing cuff in the patient in a minimally invasive manner and which includes

- (1) a housing,
- (2) an operating handle mounted on said housing,
- (3) at least one fastener stored in said housing, said fastener

having an elastic limit, and

(4) a fastener handling means on said housing and operationally connected to said operating handle to be controlled by said operating handle for storing said fastener and securing said fastener through said flexible sewing cuff and into the patient's tissue from one side of said sewing cuff and the tissue to attach said flexible sewing cuff to the patient without deforming said fastener beyond its elastic limit.



15. (Amended) In combination:

A) a heart valve prosthesis which includes

(1) a flexible sewing cuff,

(2) a prosthesis valve separate and spaceable from said

flexible sewing cuff, and

(3) means for securely attaching said valve [body] to said flexible sewing cuff after said flexible swing cuff has been placed in a patient; and

B) a tool for placing said flexible sewing cuff in the patient in a minimally invasive manner and which includes

(1) a housing,

(2) an operating handle mounted on said housing,

(3) at least one fastener stored in said housing, said fastener

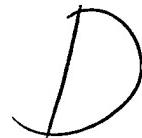
having an elastic limit, and

(4) a fastener handling means on said housing and operationally connected to said operating handle to be controlled by said operating handle for storing said fastener and securing said fastener through said flexible sewing cuff and into the patient's tissue to attach said flexible sewing cuff to the patient without deforming said fastener beyond its elastic limit.

20. (Thrice Amended) In combination:

A) a multipart heart valve prosthesis which includes

(1) a flexible sewing cuff,



(2) a prosthesis heart valve separate and spaceable from said flexible sewing cuff, and

(3) anchor elements for securely attaching said prosthesis heart valve to said flexible sewing cuff after said flexible sewing cuff has been attached to a patient;

B) a fastener for attaching said sewing cuff to the patient from one side of said sewing cuff, said fastener having an elastic limit and an initial shape; and

C) means for forcing said fastener through said sewing cuff and attaching said sewing cuff to the patient without exceeding the elastic limit of said fastener.

Claims 21-27 have been added.

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